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## Stories of Hope: ALS



**Dan Desmond** caught himself using a hoe as a crutch as he walked his 6-acre property east of San Diego. It was one of the little hints he ignored until one day in 2010 when he couldn't finish a hike. "My legs just weren't working," he said.

He had amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, the doctors told him, Lou Gehrig's disease. He went online to learn more and spent two hours at the ALS Association office in San Diego. "I did not like what I was hearing," he said. "I did not like the way things were going." But he found a way to cope.

He subscribed to a philosophical attitude. "Everyone has depression at different times, and everybody's going to die at one time or another. So what we're talking about, from here to death, what kind of quality of life do you want, and what can you do to impact the quality? That's how I look at life."

He said he knows stem cell research underway today is not likely to help him, "but the research is going to help thousands of people down the road, and I think that's wonderful."

Watch the Spotlight on ALS talks

Read about CIRM funding of ALS

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